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## **TPA Agencies Agree To First-Ever Schedule To Remove Transuranic Mixed Waste**

*New Deadlines Set for Mixed Low-Level Waste, Transuranic Mixed Waste*

RICHLAND, WASH. – The Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies recently signed an agreement to change milestones in the TPA for the retrieval, storage, and shipment of mixed low-level waste and transuranic mixed waste at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state.

The TPA agencies, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), completed seven months of negotiations in April 2010. After a public comment period and resolutions of those comments, the Agencies signed the new agreement on September 15, 2010.

A major change includes the replacement of the “To Be Determined” date to treat (or ship) all transuranic mixed (TRUM) waste off the Hanford site to an actual 2030 date.

Also, the existing milestone to submit an annual revision of the Project Management Plan was modified to address the disposition of “no path forward” wastes that are in storage as of June 30, 2009.

The TPA agencies considered input from the public, Tribal Nations, the State of Oregon, the Hanford Advisory Board, and other stakeholders on the proposed milestone changes before they were finalized.

The importance of these changes to cleanup:

- Sets a deadline of 2030 to remove all legacy transuranic mixed waste from Hanford. Previously, there were no requirements or deadlines for removing this waste.
- Replaces enforceable milestones during four years (2012 to 2016) with non-enforceable target milestones, consistent with a shift of resources to the Columbia River Corridor and other higher priority Hanford Site cleanup tasks.

- When these milestones are completed, workers will have removed the retrievably-stored waste (RSW) from the burial grounds, eliminated the backlog of mixed low-level waste (MLLW) and TRUM waste, and shipped the TRUM waste off site.

The changes affect the schedules for the management of several types of Hanford Site waste in the M-091 milestone series as set out in the TPA document. The cleanup schedules (milestones) are for the retrieval, storage, shipment, and treatment of MLLW and TRUM waste.

An adjustment to previous M-091 milestones in the agreement takes into account work completed early thanks to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. Changes also streamline and simplify language in the agreement in response to 2009 public comments.

### **Background**

In 2002, about 15,000 cubic meters (equivalent to about 75,000 55-gallon drums) of RSW were in Hanford's Low Level Burial Grounds. In 2003, DOE began to remove drums, boxes and cans of debris containing suspect TRUM waste that DOE temporarily buried in Hanford's Central Plateau.

The process begins with workers reviewing storage history of the waste, uncovering a container, removing it from the ground, and doing non-destructive assay to see if it is MLLW or TRUM waste. If the waste is MLLW, it is treated and sent to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility or lined mixed waste trenches on the Hanford Site. If the waste is TRUM waste, workers prepare it for off-site disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Workers have retrieved about two-thirds of the waste from storage so far.

### **TPA Negotiations and Milestones Overview**

Ecology and DOE began negotiations in the fall of 2009 to replace the "to be determined dates." During negotiations, they agreed to evaluate changes to the entire M-091 milestone series (cleanup schedules).

The effort aimed to realign existing milestones and establish new milestones to ensure continued progress in processing and shipping Hanford waste off site including enforceable milestones for off-site shipment of TRUM waste.

Responding to 2009 public comments, the agencies simplified the milestone language by removing description of completed work, and re-organizing the remaining descriptions.

DOE plans to use ARRA funding to continue the retrieval of suspect TRUM waste, treatment of MLLW and certification of TRUM waste in Fiscal Years (FY) 2010 and 2011.

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